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TONBRIDGE RURAL DISTRICT.

REPORT OF THE MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH

FOR THE YEAR 1939.

TONBRIDGE RURAL DISTRICT.

1939 HEALTH REPORT.

General Statistics.

Area (acres)	4,687
(a) Resident Population (Census 1931) ...	18,063
(b) Resident Population (Registrar General's Estimate (mid-year 1939)	19,230
(c) Average Population appropriate to the calculation of death rates..... ...	21,910
Rateable Value	£137,137
Sum represented by a penny rate	£542
Number of inhabited houses (according to Rate Books, end of 1939)	6016

EXTRACTS FROM VITAL STATISTICS FOR THE YEAR.

		Total	Male	Female.
Live Births	Legitimate	251	124	127
	Illegitimate	8	5	3
		259	129	130

Birth rate per 1.000 estimated resident population mid 1939 ..... 13.5

		Total	Male	Female.
Still Births	Legitimate	9	4	5
	Illegitimate	-	-	-
		9	4	5

Stillbirth rate per 1.000 total (live and still) births 33.6

	Total	Male	Female
Deaths	249	138	111

Death rate per 1.000 estimated average population. 11.4

Deaths from puerperal causes:-	Deaths	Rate per 1.000 total (live and still) births.
Puerperal Sepsis ...	0	0.00
Other Puerperal causes .	1	3.68
	1	3.68

Death Rate of Infants under one year of age:-

All infants per 1,000 live births	72.2
Legitimate infants per 1,000 legitimate live births.	62.8
Illegitimate infants per 1,000 illegitimate live births.	375.0
The total number of infant deaths was:-	19
Deaths from cancer (all ages)	31
Deaths from measles (all ages)	nil
Deaths from whooping cough (all ages)	nil
Deaths from diarrhoea (under two years of age) ...	1

SANITARY CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE DISTRICT.

WATER SUPPLIES.

The various parishes of the Tonbridge Rural District are supplied by the South Kent Water Company, the Tonbridge Water Company, Southborough Urban District Council and Tunbridge Wells Corporation. The largest supplier is the South Kent Water Company; the whole of the water supplied in the South Kent area is obtained under contract from the Mid-Kent Company.

Some small extensions have been made to the mains at Horsmonden.

The reports of both chemical and bacteriological analyses have been satisfactory during the year.

DRAINAGE AND SEWERAGE.

No sewer extensions have been made during the year beyond the construction of a sewer and small electric lifting plant to deal with the drainage from certain properties at Langton Ridge.

REFUSE DISPOSAL.

There have been no material alterations during the year in respect of house refuse collection, cesspool emptying. The whole of the District is efficiently scavenged.

PREVALENCE OF, AND CONTROL OVER, INFECTIOUS DISEASE.

NOTIFIABLE DISEASES DURING THE YEAR.

Disease.	Total Cases Notified.	Cases admitted to Hospital.	Total Deaths.
Scarlet Fever	9	9	-
Diphtheria	5	5	1
Paratyphoid Fever	1	1	-
Cerebrospinal Fever	1	1	-
Ac.Anterior Poliomyelitis	1	-	-
Ophthalmia Neonatorum	1	1	-
Pneumonia	6	1	-

NOTIFIABLE DISEASES DURING THE YEAR (Cont'd).

Disease	Total Cases Notified.	Cases admitted to Hospital.	Total Deaths.
Erysipelas	2	1	-
Puerperal Pyrexia	4	2	-
Whooping Cough.	22	-	-
	52	21	1

SCARLET FEVER.- Only 9 cases of this disease occurred during the year in comparison with 25 cases in the previous year. They were treated at the Tonbridge Joint Isolation Hospital at Capel, and were from the following parishes:- Capel 3, Horsmonden 2, Five Oak Green 1, Tudeley 1, and Pembury County Hospital 2.

The age groups were as under:-

1-5	5-10	10-15		
5	3	1	=	9

Three cases occurred in London hop-pickers' children.

DIPHTHERIA.- Five cases were notified with two deaths as against 37 cases with one death in the previous year. Each of the following parishes had 1 case:-

Brenchley 1, Horsmonden 1, Five Oak Green 1, Pembury 1. Tudeley 1.

2-5	5-10	40 years		
3	1	1	=	5

All the cases were admitted to Capel Hospital. Two bacteriological "carriers" found by swabbing of the contacts were admitted to Capel Hospital. One of the fatal cases occurred in a London evacuee child.

CEREBRO-SPINAL FEVER.- This case, a female aged 52 years, was treated in Hospital and had first been admitted to the County Hospital from Sevenoaks which is in the West Kent area.

ACUTE ANTERIOR POLIOMYELITIS.- One case occurred at Pembury in a boy aged 12 years who attended a private school. The medical practitioner in attendance, the headmaster and Medical Officer of Health met in consultation regarding the contacts.

OPTHALMIA NEONATORUM.- One case was notified from the County Hospital and recovered with vision unimpaired.

MINOR INFECTIOUS DISEASES.- Head Teachers notified 276 actual or suspected cases, as follows:- chickenpox 131, whooping cough 64, mumps 28, scabies 20, impetigo 17, ringworm 6, measles 4, tonsillitis 2, german measles 2 and "pink eye 2."

TUBERCULOSIS.- A total of 20 new cases were notified; 6 deaths were registered.

Age Periods.	NEW CASES.				DEATHS.			
	Respiratory		Non-Respiratory.		Respiratory		Non-Respiratory	
	Male	Female.	Male	Female.	Male.	Female.	Male.	Female.
1	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-
5	-	-	3	1	-	-	-	-
15	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-
25	3	1	-	1	2	-	-	-
35	1	1	1	1	-	-	-	-
45	1	-	-	-	1	1	-	-
55	1	1	-	-	-	1	-	-
65 & up	1	-	-	-	1	-	-	-
	7	5	4	4	4	2	-	-
	12		8		6		-	

MATERNITY AND CHILD WELFARE SERVICES.

Health Visiting.- The following abridged report supplied by Miss H. Wakefield, Superintendent for the West Kent Area of the County Nursing Association, gives particulars of the visits made by the District Nurses of the Queen's Institute of District Nursing who are located at twelve points in the Tonbridge Rural Area, and these attend to the constituent parishes.

Nursing District.	NO. OF VISITS.				
	To Expectant Mothers.		To Infants under 12 months.		To children 1 - 5 years.
	First.	Sub-sequent.	First.	Sub-sequent.	
Ashurst & Groombridge	5	12	2	26	57
Brenchley & Matfield	18	166	33	140	378
Capel & Tudeley	13	95	33	107	353
Hadlow	4	-	31	271	510
Hildenborough	22	157	26	142	144
Horsmonden	35	62	29	202	194
Lamberhurst	21	156	15	159	219
Langton Green	5	18	6	105	173
Paddock Wood	27	121	18	140	175
Pembury	21	84	24	240	281
Speldhurst	5	72	9	91	219
Bidborough	-	2	6	29	51
	176	945	232	1,652	2,754

INFANT WELFARE CENTRES.

The following figures show the attendances made at the various Centres in the Tonbridge Rural District provided by Voluntary Associations and aided by the District Council. The Health Visitor for the respective parish attends each meeting of the Centre, and the Welfare Medical Officer, usually the local doctor, attends each Centre at least once a month. The Statutory Committee meets quarterly and is attended by Council members, Welfare Centre honorary secretaries, the Superintendent for the West Area of the Kent Nursing Association, and the Medical Officer of Health, who submits quarterly reports to the Committee on the work done.

CENTRES.	Attendances by children. Under 1 year.	1 - 5 Years.	No. of Sessions during Year.	Total attendances by Mothers
Brenchley	189	379	30	456
Capel	192	284	22	398
Hadlow	132	184	20	283
Hildenborough	549	335	46	732
Horsmonden	137	280	28	312
Lamberhurst	182	319	28	436
Paddock Wood	81	157	22	189
Pembury	150	422	24	334
Speldhurst and Langton.	79	303	24	321
Totals (10 Centres).	1,691	2,663	244	3,461

MATERNAL DEATH.- One maternal death occurred in the parish of Golden Green, the doctor performing the post-mortem examination supplied the Ministry of Health with a confidential report.

ANTE-NATAL SCHEME.- In connexion with the Council's scheme for the routine ante-natal examinations of women who have engaged midwives for their confinement but who are unable to pay the medical fee, 51 ante-natal examinations and 9 post-natal examinations were made by doctors during the year.

Grants of Milk.- Free grants of milk on grounds of health were recommended in necessitous cases to expectant and nursing mothers and young children;

	Liquid gallons.	Dried Pounds.
(i) By the Council	1,844	55
(ii) By Voluntary Associations operating in the area of the Council.		724
	1,844	779

Dental Scheme.- During 1939, under the above scheme, 16 mothers and six children received dental treatment during the year.

Child Life Protection.-

Number of persons receiving children for reward at the end of the year ..	40
Number of children:	
(i) at the end of the year ...	67
(ii) who died during the year ...	2
(iii) on whom inquests were held during the year ...	1
Number of child protection visitors at the end of the year who were:-	
(i) Health Visitors ...	2
(ii) Female, other than Health Visitors ...	8
(iii) Male ...	nil

REPORT OF THE CHIEF SANITARY INSPECTOR, MR.E.A.P.MAY, FOR 1939.

HOUSING.

During the year 151 dwellings were inspected under the Housing Act of which total 124 were dealt with in the first half of the year. During this period there appeared signs of great interest in the Housing (Rural Workers) Acts and of the full effects of the previous year and a half's housing work bearing fruit.

To-day the position is that local authorities must stop short of demolition when dealing with unfit cottage property and also that grants under the Housing (Rural Workers) Acts will not be made for the time being except in cases where additional accommodation is made available. These conditions necessarily have resulted in curtailment of housing activities.

Of these 151 cottages, 95 were found to be in need of repair to a varying degree whilst 9 fell in the category of Section 11. Informal notices were served upon the owners of those requiring repair and of these, 46 have been completed to date.

HOUSING (RURALWORKERS) ACTS 1926 - 1938.

From the report of 1938 it will be seen that at least 15 applications for grants under this Act from the County Council were anticipated. During the year, 16 applications were actually submitted and plans and schedules were prepared in respect of 19 others and these would normally have been sent in for similar consideration. A further 4 cottages were found of a type likely to rank for grant and tentative proposals were discussed with the owner, this making a total of 39 considered under this Act.

Of the applications made one in respect of 2 cottages was ratified and a contract of value over £300 completed. Another in respect of 2 cottages was rejected on the grounds that the premises could not be made to comply with a reasonable

standard. Whilst the remaining 12 applications have been submitted and the principal works proposed agreed with the County Council's technical staff, nothing definite has transpired. In view of the facts mentioned elsewhere in the report it is difficult to speculate whether or not any advance will be made to enable the improvements to be put in hand but it is thought that 8 cottages might still be dealt with under the Act.... Negotiations with the other 19 must be regarded as at a standstill as none of these properties fulfil the now essential requirement of adding to the available accommodation.

CLEARANCE AREAS.

Three groups of dwellings were considered to be unhealthy and dangerous and two of these groups were dealt with under Section 25 of the Housing Act, 1936. They are Hodges Cottages, Matfield and School Lane Cottages, Hadlow. A Public Inquiry was held on the 18th July, 1939 but the Minister's decision will be deferred until the end of the present War.

HORSMONDEN HOUSING SURVEY.

During the early part of the year a further 63 houses were inspected in Horsmonden. This brings the total inspected to 234. Only a few properties are outstanding of which a small number are in a bad condition.

Analysis of the total number inspected reveals that -

50	cottages were fit in all respects
145	were capable of repair at reasonable cost
31	required extensive reconstruction
8	have been demolished.
234	...

Action taken by the Council resulted in the closure of two detached cottages, viz: Birch Cottage and Dog House. The former is being enlarged and modernized in accordance with proposals submitted to and approved by the Council.

The following data is a summary of the work carried out with respect to housing throughout the district:-

INSPECTION OF DWELLING HOUSES DURING THE YEAR.

(1)	1.(a) Total number of dwelling houses inspected for housing defects (under Public Health and Housing Acts)	216
	(b) Number of inspections made for this purpose.	877

2. (a) Number of dwelling houses (included under sub-head 1a. above inspected and recorded under the Housing Consolidated Regulations, 1925 - 1932 151

(b) Number of inspections made for the purpose. 768

3. Number of houses found to be unfit and incapable of repair at a reasonable cost (Section 11) ... 11

4. Number of houses (exclusive of those referred to under preceding sub head) found not to be reasonably fit for habitation in all respects ... 95

(11) REMEDY OF DEFECTS BY INFORMAL ACTION.

Number of houses rendered fit following informal action including 24 dealt with under Public Health Acts. 70

(III) ACTION UNDER SECTION 11 OF THE HOUSING ACT, 1936

1. (a) Number of dwelling houses in respect of which demolition orders were made ... ... Nil

(b) Number of dwelling houses demolished 8

(c) Number of dwelling houses awaiting demolition Nil

2. (a) Number of dwelling houses closed (acceptance of Undertaking which has not been subsequently cancelled) 2

(b) Number of dwelling houses reconditioned and operative Undertakings cancelled 2

(IV) ACTION UNDER SECTION 25 OF THE HOUSING ACT, 1936.

1. Number of dwelling houses declared to constitute Clearance areas 5

2. Number of dwelling houses made the subject of a Local Public Inquiry 5

The following is a tabulated statement indicating the nature of the more important works carried out to dwelling houses during the year.

Walls.

Numbered rendered dry by insertion of effective horizontally bedded damp proof course ... 35

Numbered rendered dry by internal rendering with waterproofed cement. 48

Number repaired (including tile hanging, weather-boarding, replastering, etc) 81

Number rebuilt and/or foundations underpinned. 23

Chimneys.

Number of chimney stacks taken down and rebuilt ...	1
Number of chimney stacks provided with lead flashings tray damp proof course or repointed ...	15
Number of fireplaces or flues reconstructed ...	2

External Paving.

Number of houses provided with impervious paving ..	19
Number of houses where paving repaired ...	2

Roofs.

Number of houses of which roofs stripped, rebattened and tiled or slated	9
Number of houses of which roofs were repaired ...	11
Number of houses of which roofs were provided with new guttering and downspouts.. ...	22
Number of houses of which roof guttering repaired..	11

Floors.

Number of ventilated timber floors substituted for floors of unsuitable material, ...	10
Number of waterproofed concrete floors substituted for damp brick floors	33
Number of existing floors repaired, sub-floor ventilation provided or improved, etc. ...	14

Lighting and Ventilation.

Number of new windows constructed in houses ...	60
Number of existing windows repaired ...	30
Number of dormer windows tiled or dressed with lead	2
Number of rooms provided with additional ventilation	11

Food Storage.

Number of new food stores constructed. ...	11
Number of existing food stores rendered fit ...	11

Water Supply and Drainage.

Water supply service extended and laid on over sinks.	13
Number of glazed stoneware sinks provided and fixed.	38
Number of water closets provided with automatic flushing apparatus.	4
Number of new water closet compartments complete with pedestal pan and flushing apparatus provided ...	41
Number of closets converted to water closets ...	4
Number of new drainage systems complete with septic tank and sub-irrigation effluent pipes ...	12
Number of repairs or modifications to existing drainage systems...	17

Miscellaneous.

Coppers provided or rebuilt	5
Ceilings renewed or repaired	49
New staircases constructed	3
Staircases repaired or stiffened	5
Cooking ranges renewed or repaired. ...	10
Rooms re-decorated	83
Number of houses re-decorated externally ...	28
Number of dustbins provided	56

INSPECTION AND SUPERVISION OF FOOD.

MILK SUPPLY.

There are 124 registered producers of milk in the rural district of which total 24 retail from the farm. In addition 25 persons are registered as retail purveyors only.

During the year 164 inspections of dairy premises were made mostly at milking times, including 27 inspections of retailer's premises. Improvement of the methods of production and distribution of the milk is the object of these inspections and where necessary to secure structural improvements.

Four milking sheds were completely reconstructed during the year and also two retail dairies rebuilt.

Steam sterilization equipment was installed at three dairy premises.

The work included the conversion of buildings at a stock farm into dairy premises resulting in a very satisfactory job. The premises are now licensed to produce accredited milk.

DESIGNATED MILK SUPPLIES.

One addition has been made to the Roll of Accredited Milk Producers during the year and another has been granted a Tuberculin tested licence where before his herd was Accredited. At the end of the year there were 24 Accredited and 2 T.T. Producers licensed within the district.

85 samples were taken in all, of which, 16 failed to conform to the requisite standard. This represents 18.8% of the samples taken.

The County Council laboratory staff applied the additional "Coliform" test in respect of 30 samples only, none of which were taken later in the year than June.

SUPPLIES TO SCHOOLS.

The scheme to supply milk to schools, instituted by the Milk Marketing Board, in 1934 has been extended under the supervision of the Kent Education Committee to sixteen separate schools within this rural district.

PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS.

In accordance with the arrangement with the County Medical Officer of Health bi-annual samples were taken of the milk supply to Pembury County Hospital and the Pembury Grange Institution.

All four samples were of a pasteurised milk and proved to be of a satisfactory standard of cleanliness.

MEAT AND OTHER FOOD.

At the end of the year seventeen slaughterhouses were being used regularly together with one Knackers Yard premises. Thirty-eight licensed slaughtermen, including two newly licensed during the year, served the needs of these premises.

As large a percentage of home killed meat as reasonably practicable was inspected at slaughterhouses. This presented the same problem of organization as reported in previous years, and the percentage of meat actually seen immediately after slaughter probably did not exceed 40% of the home killed meat handled in the district.

Post-mortem examination of carcases was carried out in accordance with the established practice recommended by Memorandum 62 Foods. The following table has been compiled at the direction of the Ministry of Health. The percentage index in each case is high and is not conclusive evidence of the incidence of disease it being remembered that it is the normal practice for butchers to report abnormal conditions.

Thus although only a proportion of the total animals killed were seen, the amount of meat surrendered probably approximates closely to the whole of the amount of meat actually diseased or unfit.

Carcases Inspected and Condemned.

	Bovines.	Sheep.	Swine.	Total.
Number inspected.	166	268	255	689
All diseases except Tuberculosis:-				
a. Whole carcases condemned	Nil	Nil	1	1
b. Carcases of which some part or organ was condemned.	21	16	18	55
c. Percentage of number inspected affected with disease other than T.B. in any degree.	12.6	5.9	7.4	-
Tuberculosis:-				
a. Whole carcase condemned	4	Nil	1	5
b. Carcases of which some part was condemned.	25	Nil	11	36
c. Percentage of number inspected affected with tuberculosis to any degree.	17.4	Nil	4.7	-
Total weight of meat condemned:-				
a. Affected with disease other than T.B.	281 lbs.	58 lbs.	242 lbs.	581 lbs.
b. Affected with T.B.	3407 lbs.	Nil.	341 lbs.	3748 lbs.
				4329 lbs.

SHOP PREMISES.

During the year a total of 170 inspections were made of shop premises in the district.

Enquiries made into the weekly hours worked by a young person revealed both excessively long hours and inadequate intervals for meals; these matters have since been rectified.

Action taken under the Shops Act, 1934 included requests for improved ventilation to three separate retail shops and heating facilities to one other; all cases were dealt with satisfactorily.

SHOPS (HOURS OF CLOSING) ACT.

By an Order in Council made on the 19th October, under the Defence Regulations, 1939, general hours of closing were amended to six o'clock and half-past seven on the late day.

A decision to substitute later hours of closing was reached by the Council after considering questionnaires completed by shop-keepers, in the district.

FACTORIES AND WORKSHOPS.

No. of inspections of factories and workshops...	11
No. of inspections of bakehouses	25

Sanitary accommodation for female workers at one factory was found to be unsatisfactory. As a result of representations to the owners the necessary improvements were carried out.

BAKEHOUSES.

A survey of all bakehouses was carried out at the end of the year and details of the districts requirements and potential capacity both for storage and baking compiled. The information recorded was also of value to the Food Control Office responsible for administering the Emergency Powers (Defence) Food Rationing Order.

Particulars of the structural condition, cleanliness, utility services and relevant matters were noted.

Fourteen matters requiring urgent attention were asked for verbally.

Other defects of a structural nature have been recorded and attention to these will be requested when time is opportune.

DISINFECTION, CLEANSING, ETC. OF PREMISES.

Number of houses disinfected in connexion with cases of infectious disease	30
Number of houses de-infested	5

SCABIES.

Many cases of scabies have been notified and treated among evacuee children. The Council have now authorised the steam disinfestation of bedding and personal clothing in all cases; and directed that terminal fumigation always be offered to the householder.

SUPERVISION OF HOP-PICKERS ENCAMPMENTS.

Hop-picking started generally throughout the district in the last days of August and finished about Saturday, 30th September, except at a few farms where labour problems protracted the season.

Considerable difficulty was experienced by farmers this year due to the influence of the war. In many instances persons originally booked for picking were evacuated elsewhere or accompanied friends to reception areas; others arrived safely on the camps but brought other people's children from evacuable areas. Despite various complications satisfaction has been expressed with this year's crop and the prolonged dry spell saved what might easily have been a disastrous year.

Immediately preceding the season all hop and fruit growers in the district were circularised as in former years.

FOOD CONTROL.

Periodic inspections were made of food supplied to hop-pickers from stalls, shops, vans and cycles. The quality of foodstuffs was generally good.

In one instance following a complaint, meat and meat pies being sold from a small van were subjected to detailed examination. All goods were found to be in a good condition with the exception of one sheep's offal which was surrendered.